The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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Contents.

	PAGE.
Notes of the Month	1
Life and Religion. By John Campbell, M.D.	3
Legislation or Persuasion. Rev. M. Watkins	4
Obituary: The late Rev. Wm. Napier	5
The Sustentation Fund. Rev. J. A. Miskimmin, B A.	7
"Non-Subscribing." Rev. John Barron	8
For the Children: Metamorphosis...	9
A Ghostly Scene: Rev. W. S. Smith	10
Reports:—First Belfast; Cairncastle; Dromore; Glenarm; Mountpottinger; Newry; Unity Guild ...	11
Echoes	13

Notes of the Month.

It is fitting that this month's issue should convey to our readers the heartiest of good wishes for the Christmas season. May the latter be for them and for all they hold dear a time of great happiness. May the spirit of peace and goodwill be present in the hearts of all our friends, and so actuate and inspire them that they shall carry its beneficent influence into other hearts and lives, thus creating that wider and truer Christmas atmosphere in which alone is perfect joy and satisfaction. In yet wider extension may that atmosphere characterise all lands and attune all Christian hearts, so that everywhere the gracious influence of Christ may prevail and lead to a deeper insight into the meaning and message of Christmas time.

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By the death of the Rev. William Napier our church lost its oldest minister and one of its most interesting personalities. For more than half a century he had laboured on behalf of our cause in the North of Ireland, living his life in quiet centres of work and worship, winning for himself the increasing respect and affection of those amongst whom he was called upon to minister. When our congregations became organised as the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, it was generally felt that his services made him deserving of the highest honours the newly-formed church could bestow, and he became its first moderator. With advancing years his physical powers naturally began to fail, but up to the very last he had lost little of his sense of humour or of his deep interest in life. It was characteristic that his call to a higher service came when he was indulging in one of his most typical tastes—his love of gardening. That the call came suddenly was no disadvantage so far as he was concerned, but for his relatives and for his many friends it came as a great shock. To them we would tender our heartfelt sympathy in their hour of bereavement.

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Major Leonard Darwin has recently given a lecture in Belfast on the "Science of Eugenics" in which he emphasised the fact that it is possible to gradually improve the human race by endeavouring to restrict the multiplication of those who are mentally, morally, or physically degenerate. He deprecated the decline in the birth-rate among the more useful classes of society, and advocated the segregation of the feeble-minded and the morally deficient. He showed how his father's teaching as to evolution might be applied to the improvement of the race of men, and

how intelligent study of heredity and environment would help to produce a higher general type of humanity than we have at present.

* *

The lecture was most favourably received and created a sympathetic interest in the subject discussed. This is evidence of a remarkable advance in local thought in Belfast. Within the memory of many still living, Huxley and Tyndall, at a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science held in Belfast, brought upon themselves the most virulent abuse of the orthodox theologians of that time, because they upheld the Darwinian theory in the addresses they delivered. Those stout old defenders of the creeds are dead and gone. Darwin's researches remain. As Professor Lindsay, in introducing the lecturer, said, "Charles Darwin's work stood firm. After many an assault that great edifice remained unshaken. Those who assailed it—a rapidly diminishing company—would be better employed in trying to understand it."

* *

The importance of the subject which Major Leonard Darwin so ably expounded will be at once recognised by all members of our church. The essential principle which governs our interpretation of Christianity, and which differentiates us from all other denominations, is our belief in the value of character and conduct. We insist that belief in living the right kind of life is of far more importance than professing adhesion to a series of theological theories. We inculcate upon the individual that he is responsible for his actions and for the effect those actions may have upon his descendants and upon his neighbours. We desire to make religion the means of evolving higher types of men than we are. In one view the theory of evolution is not antagonistic to religion, as the Belfast orthodox theologians of the last generation thought. On the contrary it fills us with hope. It supports our belief in the continuous spiritual and temporal improvement of the human race. It adds strength to our religious convictions. It shows us that the future of humanity is largely in the hands of those now living, and it commands us to try to be better men than we are. Science and religion, so far from being opposing forces, are powerful allies in the evolution of the ideal man.

* *

Major Leonard Darwin is the fourth son of the great Charles R. Darwin. Charles R. Darwin was the son of Dr. Robert W. Darwin and of a daughter of Josiah Wedgwood, the celebrated potter, and was the grandson of Dr. Erasmus Darwin. Josiah Wedgwood was a memorable English Unitarian, while Dr. Erasmus Darwin held what in his day were called free-thinking opinions. Charles R. Darwin thus entered upon life with an hereditary inclination towards independent thought and under the guidance of a Unitarian mother. His mind, untrammelled by conventional theology, fearlessly faced the facts and formulated the great scientific doctrine which has revolutionised our ideas of things spiritual and temporal.

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Dr. John Campbell is anxious to include in his History of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church the pedigrees of families at present connected with any of our congregations, and will be thankful to those who will supply them to him.

* *

We have been watching with considerable interest the results of the change of management at the Depository which took place some eighteen months ago. Looking back at the shop as it was then, we find it difficult to realise that it is the same place. There is an air of life about it which is quite refreshing. The business is now carried on in an up-to date manner. It is possible to get everything one requires in books and stationery, and the manager tells us that there is quite a considerable business done in printing and church music. We hear that there will be a large display of Christmas Goods this month, and that the hours of business are to be extended as they were last December. We heartily congratulate the Committee on the energy they are showing, and we trust that Unitarians in the North of Ireland will do what is in their power to render practical assistance by visiting the Depository before making purchases elsewhere.

LIFE AND RELIGION.

By John Campbell, M.D.

LIFE is the kindergarten of the soul —the school in which we are preparing ourselves for promotion to the world to come, and fitting ourselves for the discharge of the duties which await us beyond the grave. Each one has, to a large extent, the shaping of his destiny and the power to aid or to hinder others in their upward efforts. A great responsibility is thus put upon each generation, the responsibility of properly interpreting God's will in terms suitable to the people of its own time and to those who come next in the succession. Hence it behoves us to attain the highest possible conception of the relation of life to religion. If this duty is properly discharged each age must have a higher standard of ideals than its predecessors had.

We, in this present century, have advantages which men never had before. Behind us are the records of the experiences of former ages, showing us the depths to which many of the children of the Father have fallen and the heights to which some of them have risen. In the Bible especially we have an invaluable guide in the history of the most spiritually gifted race of ancient times, the Jews. Around us are the wondrous works of the Creator gradually being made more comprehensible by the discoveries of science. Before us goes the bright light of the Holy Spirit of God, as revealed to us in the life and death of Jesus, leading us ever onward and upward, and throwing back its rays to illuminate our path and to warm up the flickering spark of divine nature with which we are endowed.

The study of religion and of its application to daily life is incumbent upon every individual, and it is instructive to place side by side the main tenets of the stationary or "orthodox" and of the progressive or "heterodox" religious belief, and simply contrast them without further remark. The reader can then see for himself which is for him the most inspiring and ennobling.

The "orthodox" belief is summed up in what are known as the *Five points of Calvinism*—viz:—1. Election. 2. Particular redemption. 3. Denial of free will. 4. Effectual grace. 5. Final perseverance.

"ORTHODOX" BELIEF.	"HETERODOX" BELIEF.
1. Election: that God foreordained Adam's fall, and from all eternity elected some men to be saved and others to be lost.	1. That God, being "our Father which art in Heaven," has from all eternity loved the children He has made "in His own image," and, though sin always brings punishment, "desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live."
2. Particular redemption: that Christ died for the *elect* only.	2. That Christ lived and died to reveal to all mankind their relationship and duty to the Father.
3. Denial of free will: that unregenerate man has no freedom of the will.	3. That all men have freedom of will to follow a good or evil course, and can strengthen their inclination towards good by communing with God and seeking His help.
4. Effectual grace: that this is given only to the elect.	4. That the grace of God is freely given to every one who seeks it.
5. Final perseverance: that the elect have irresistible grace, and cannot fail of final salvation.	5. That final salvation awaits every one who seeks it.

The "orthodox" belief is fixed and unalterable. The majority of Protestants are brought up under its influence, and their ministers and office-bearers in the congregations have signed a solemn declaration, equivalent to an oath, that such is their belief They are thus precluded from avowing a change of opinion, should their growing knowledge and experience lead them to alter their views. The "heterodox" churches do not bind their ministers or members to any particular statement of belief, lest by so doing they should encourage insincerity or stifle thought on religious matters.

LEGISLATION OR PERSUASION.

An outline of a paper read at the Annual Temperance Conference, held in Holywood, on Wednesday, 22nd November,

By Rev. Mathew Watkins.

HAPPY would be our country if, by the power of a lofty public opinion, it could dispense with the need for restrictive legislation, and its attendant penalties when rightly enforced, against indulgences in alcholic intemperance. But until such a lofty public opinion is created, and becomes sufficiently prevailing to effect the clearance from social life of excessive drinking, the need for prohibitive laws will remain; and temperance workers are obliged to continue the struggle both in high and low places of society. This is the undeniable truth, whether the greater emphasis is laid upon political action leading directly to restrictive legislation, or simply persuasion leading to a total abstinence pledge, since the problem that alcoholic intemperance brings before us in almost every walk of life is nothing if not colossal in its magnitude, and insidiously degrading in its effects. So thoroughly and effectively has alcohol wormed its way into our national life that even in homes where it has done irreparable wrong, and wrought dire ruin, there is not infrequently found a faith in its efficacy that would be touchingly pathetic, were it not for the the known falsity of the claims upon which such a faith is based. Lest there should still be some unaware or unconvinced of this indubitable fact, of the falsity of the claims of alcohol as a food or a stimulant, or of its multitudinous medicinal properties, the following extracts are appended as typical of the general opinion held by the most eminent in the medical profession.

The late Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson said many years ago,—"I am recording a matter of personal history when I say that I for one had once no thought of alcohol except as a food. I thought it cheered the heart and lifted up the mind into greater activity. After three years of the most careful examinations and severe testings, the conclusion I have come to is this, that it is an agent as potent for evil as it is powerless for good. It begins by destroying, it ends by destruction."

"As much flour or meal," said Baron Liebig, the eminent chemist, "as will lie on the point of a table-knife is more nutritious than nine quarts of the best beer. Beer, wine, spirits, etc, furnish no elements capable of entering into the composition of blood, muscular fibre, or any part which is the seat of the vital principle."

To come to a living authority. Sir Frederick Treves, says—"As a work producer, alcohol is exceedingly extravagant, and like all other extravagant measures leads to a physical bankruptcy. As a stimulant it lowers the temperature by increased loss of heat, while the power of the body to resist cold is much reduced by it."

"I was twenty years older than any of the officers or crew," writes Sir John Ross, "Voyage to the Arctic Region" 1829-33, yet I could stand the cold better than any of them, who all made use of tobacco and spirits. I entirely abstained from them. The most irresistible proof of the value of abstinence was when we abandoned our ship, and were obliged to leave behind us all our wine and spirits. It was remarkable to observe how much stronger and more able were the men to do their work when they had nothing but water to drink."

"Alcohol is distinctly a poison," says Sir Frederick Treves, "and it is a poison which, like other poisons, has certain uses; but the limitations of the use of alcohol should be as strict as the limitations of the use of any other kind of

poison. Moreover, it is a curiously insidious poison, in that it produces effects which seem to have only one antidote—alcohol again. This applies to another drug equally as insidious—morphia, or opium."

One more quotation, and one only, from the pen of George Harley, M.D.—"Every medical man or woman is painfully conscious of the fact that, not only are innumerable diseases aggravated, but many diseases actually engendered, by the habitual daily indulgence in alcohol even within the limits of temperance."

The list of quotations could be multiplied, but enough has been given to remove any reasonable doubt as to the efficacy of strong drink, also to indicate by suggestion the magnitude of the problem; and possibly sufficient has been said to arouse some questioning as to whether legislation or persuasion affords the most effective means for counteracting the evils of intemperance.

There are groups of temperance workers who lay the greater emphasis upon political legislative action, while others, in nowise belittling such work, think the emphasis should be laid upon persuading the individual and securing total abstinence pledges. Unquestionably good work is being accomplished by both groups, and we cannot refrain from praying that the power and influence of their work may increase and increase abundantly. But somehow the feeling comes back upon one, after searching and sifting carefully the reasons for and against the two views, that both should seek a close and more intimate understanding of each other's position; inasmuch as there are stages in the social life of communities as well as individuals, when the mind is open to educative impressions on temperance questions, but not ripe to the enactment of restrictive legislation. And on the other hand the stage is sometimes reached when the futility is most marked of securing pledges, without direct, precise, and effective legislation to support such work. True the legislative group with its watchword of restriction has undoubted triumphs to substantiate its claims of effectiveness. There is no necessity to look back any further than the period of the recent strike in Liverpool, for a complete vindication of the power of restrictive measures for reducing intemperance and crime. The results there, even at such a disturbing time as the late strike, were astonishing. So surprising indeed were the changes that we note at a meeting of the Magisterial Bench on October 26th, the substantial majority of no less than two to one was gained, in the face of hostile criticism in favour of the Reform Scheme drafted by the Licensing Committee which embodied some of the restrictive measures prevailing during the strike.

On the other hand, one cannot gainsay the enormous work accomplished by the persuasive temperance advocates. The great waves of temperance feeling, and the calling into being of a loftier public opinion, that have followed their labours, sweeping over large stretches of country, and demonstrating, however ephemeral such waves of feeling and public opinion might be, that effectiveness in temperance work is not confined to one camp. But the crux of the question of the rightness of emphasis lies not with the one group or the other, but in knowing when and where to emphasise the one, and when the other. There is no vital antagonism between them; and where every worker wielding an influence is urgently needed to fight the evil of intemperance, mutual interchange of thought and differences should be encouraged, for thereby the growth of a more effective measure of co-operation will be fostered, and the possibility opened up for a truer grasp of the essential work of both groups.

Obituary.

REV. WILLIAM NAPIER.

THE news of the death of the Rev. William Napier, Minister of Clough, Co. Down, and Father of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, has called forth sorrow at once both deep and widespread, to which his funeral on Monday, 20th ult., bore eloquent testimony. He was born in December, 1825, at Ballybranagh, a short mile from Ballee Meeting-house, Co. Down, and entered the ministry in 1855, when he was ordained to the oversight of Limavady Congregation. There he remained till 1864, when he was called

to Ballymoney. In 1867 he took charge of his third and last Congregation, viz., that of Clough, Co. Down, to which he had been called as assistant and successor of the late Rev. David Watson, whose demise took place a few years after Mr. Napier's installation in the said Congregation. Though appointed as Mr. Watson's "assistant and successor," yet he had virtually charge of the Congregation from the date of his installation in 1867, and there he ministered with much acceptance and fidelity for nearly 45 years. He died in harness. On Sunday, 12th ult., he officiated at his own Church. On the following Thursday afternoon, whilst engaged in gardening (of which he was very fond), he died with spade in hand. Tragic indeed was his end to us who remain; but dying in harness, with mind unclouded, and saved from lingering illness, to him his death was an ideal one.

There was a very large and most representative attendance at his funeral. Protestant and Roman Catholic clergymen were present, as well as numerous laity from their flocks. The Lord Mayor of Belfast (Mr. R. J. M'Mordie, M.P.) and his Chaplain (Rev. W. J. M'Cracken), both warm, personal friends of long-standing, were amongst those who attended. In Dundrum, where our deceased friend resided, every blind was drawn, and business brought to a standstill, and along the route from there to Clough, 3 miles distant, where the interment took place, there was abundant evidence of the respect and esteem in which he was held by all sorts and conditions of men and women. The space at our disposal will not permit of the names of the numerous professional and other gentlemen present, but we may state that the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church was well represented on the mournful occasion. Relatives bore the remains from the house to the hearse; from the hearse into the Meeting house the coffin was carried by brother ministers, and from there to the grave members of his Congregation reverently bore all that was mortal of their late beloved pastor and friend. It should be mentioned that the Service at the house was conducted by the Rev. J. J. Magill (Rademon) and Rev. H. J. Rossington (Belfast). In the Meeting-house Rev. J. A. Kelly (Dunmurry), Rev. M. S. Dunbar (Downpatrick), and Rev. Thomas Dunkerley (Comber) officiated; and at the grave, Rev. M. S. Dunbar and Rev. Thomas Munn (Greyabbey). The remains of our beloved friend now rest beside those of his much esteemed wife, who died in 1884. To his sisters and brother and other relatives we tender our respectful and sincere sympathy, assuring them that in doing this we voice the feeling of a numerous company of friends far and near who, for years to come, will join with them in loving remembrance of him who has gone, and with them often sadly exclaim—

> Oh for the touch of a vanished hand,
> And the sound of a voice that is still.

Address delivered in the Meeting-house, Clough, by the Rev. M. S. Dunbar, on the occasion of the funeral.

As the nearest brother minister to our dear friend, whose remains we are following to the grave, I have been asked to give a short address, a duty which naturally would have been performed by one of his oldest and dearest friends—Mr. Kennedy—had he not been still confined to the sick room. One personal qualification I can claim for this duty is, that for nearly eighteen years, ever since I came to Ireland, I have had the privilege of Mr. Napier's friendship, and have learned to admire and love him.

Mr. Napier's mental powers and business capacities were such as might have brought him a fortune if he had adopted a business career, but he chose the profession of the ministry, and a ministry which has very few lucrative positions; and though his abilities qualified him to fill worthily the most important of our pulpits, he chose, or it was his lot, to spend his whole life in quiet country charges, by far the greater part of it in this retired district, where, for the long period of forty-five years he has gone in and out amongst his people, carrying the consolations of the gospel, and dispensing from this pulpit the bread of life. But his special business qualifications were not lost to the Church at large, and in the meetings of his Presbytery and those of the associated Churches, he took an active part. The position he held in this wider

sphere was shown when, on the union of the various branches of our Church under the name of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, he was chosen to be its first Moderator. It was only last June that, on retiring from this office, he preached an able and eloquent sermon with much of his youthful vigour and earnestness. He was also willing at times to help, by his public utterances, causes in which he was interested, one of which was the maintenance of the union between this country and Great Britain, a matter which he strongly felt was essential to our civil and religious liberty, and to the welfare and progress of Ireland. The esteem in which he was held not only by his ministerial brethren, but by a wider public, was shown when, a few years ago, he was presented with an address and a handsome monetary gift. This much I may say of his more public life.

In the address to which I have just alluded, it is said: "Your fifty years of faithful duty have been years of deepening hold on the affections of our people." I am satisfied here to say that this is certainly true of the members of his congregation and his numerous friends in this district of Lecale where he was born and brought up, and where for nearly half-a-century he has lived and worked. He has so lived and worked that we might apply to him the description given of the Christian minister by either Longfellow, or Goldsmith, or Chaucer, and we may well believe that he tried to meet the requirements of the Apostle who said: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

And now the labourer's task is o'er. He kept to it to the last, and with mental and bodily faculties almost unimpaired, was able to perform both his pulpit and pastoral duties to the satisfaction of his flock. A long life of health and activity, chequered with sorrow and care, lonely for many years, but happy in the main, hopeful and cheerful to the last, came to the end very suddenly. But that need not grieve us. It came in the way that we believe he himself would have wished. Life well spent, duty faithfully done, our peace made with man and with God, he would have been ready—and who would not?—to say:

Life! we've been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather,
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear;
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
Then, steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not "Good-night," but in some brighter clime,
Bid me "Good morning."

THE SUSTENTATION FUND.

Rev. J. A. Miskimmin, B.A.

WITH the Editor's permission I would like to advance some reasons for the formation of a strong Sustentation Fund which will embrace all our churches in Ireland. It is patent to every unprejudiced observer, that, as matters at present stand, we cannot maintain a stated ministry in our weaker congregations for any considerable length of time. One by one our best stipend payers pass away, leaving no representatives, and very often the congregation has to make good their stipend out of the limited resources at its command. The other members are perhaps unable to increase their stipend, or it may be, unwilling to add anything to the amount paid by their forefathers. As a result the stipend is bound to become small by degrees and beautifully less. Many of our young people, sometimes whole families, leave the country for the towns, or go abroad in search of work. This is an additional source of weakness to most of our congregations. What prospect have we then of filling many of our pulpits unless some means are devised of making good the deficiency? Most congregations have money invested wherewith to pay the annual subscription to the Sustentation Fund. Assuming that no losses were incurred, this fund would in time become a source of strength to the small, struggling congregations. Knowing that they could depend on a grant from the Sustentation Fund, a better class of men would be likely to enter the ministry. Knowing also that the grants would be equal in amount, a better state of feeling would prevail than is unfortunately the case where one minister receives £10, another £5, and a third nothing at all.

While some ministers obtain grants of £20 and £30 from the English Sustentation Fund, others, with smaller salaries, who are doing as good work, receive no aid from the Fund, and yet are asked to subscribe to various institutions connected with our churches in England. As was truly stated at one of our meetings, a minister would feel that he could claim the money as a right, not as a favour, so long as his congregation fulfilled the necessary qualifications. There would be no prying into his private affairs, or those of his wife, if he had one. So long as he bore a good character and discharged his duties, he would be entitled to receive the grant from the Sustentation Fund.

Ministers would in consequence become more independent and self-respecting, and would disdain to cringe to any person, cleric or layman, with the expectation of advancing their worldly interests. Where men are labouring under a strong sense of injustice, they are not so likely to give their best work as are those who receive a fair remuneration for their services. This remark applies to the ministry as well as to any other trade or profession. The ministers of our poorer congregations are surely deserving of some consideration at the hands of the Unitarian public. Generally speaking they live long distances from Belfast, where all our meetings are held. Travelling expenses are necessarily heavy, in some cases ten times as great as those of the ministers of the wealthier congregations in and around Belfast. The latter have a further advantage in that their elders can attend the meetings of Synod, at a trifling outlay, whereas very few members of country congregations can afford to lose the time or the money. It is important, therefore, that the minister of a country congregation should be in a position to attend those meetings where the interests of his people are involved. In the Templepatrick Presbytery the maximum salary received is £133, and the minimum £95, the average being £116. When £3 for poor-rate is deducted from a stipend of £22 there is not very much left to live on.

That the work is laborious few will deny who know the wide tract of country to be traversed in summer's heat and winter's cold. In my own case the distance is nothing short of 6 miles, some houses being 7 or 8 miles distant from the manse. Where a city minister will spend a few pence, his brother minister in the country will pay 5s. or 6s. for car hire. Some people think we can live cheaper in the country than they can do in the town. With perhaps a few exceptions, the necessaries of life are as dear, if not dearer, in the country town or village than in the city, while in the latter place the quality is better as a rule. I might also refer to the discomforts and risks to health which country ministers must of necessity encounter in the discharge of their pastoral and other duties.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that their case will meet with more favourable and sympathetic consideration than it has hitherto received at the hands of the members of the church, which we are all, I trust, trying faithfully to serve.

"NON-SUBSCRIBING."

By Rev. John Barron.

CAN you write your name? To most people nowadays that, in itself, is not a difficult thing to do; but under many circumstances it is a serious one. Write out your will; but, if you don't attach your name to it, it is worthless; so also is it with a written agreement, a bond, a cheque—any document to which your signature is required.

We are distinguished from other Presbyterians by having "Non-Subscribing" attached to our denominational name. That means that to something, somebody or other doesn't write his name. A very small thing, apparently, to keep us separate from the larger and perhaps better known Presbyterian Churches.

A young man, years ago, decided to become a Unitarian minister. "Oh!" said an influential friend, "you are throwing yourself away by becoming a Dissenting minister. Why, man, join the Church of England where you will have better prospects!" "But I couldn't subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles," was the reply. "Oh! we laymen haven't to do that," was the answer on reflection.

It may seem a small matter this writing of a name to the Articles of the Episcopal

Church, or to the Confession of Faith among the Presbyterians.

"Oh! you hear quite as liberal preaching often in the other churches as you do among Unitarians," has often enough been said to us When special lecturers, under Unitarian auspices, have gone to Scotland, from several quarters the remark has come that it was like taking coals to Newcastle. These special lecturers had nothing to say that Scotch professors couldn't have said equally as well.

Now, all this may be true. In a way we are glad to know it, for it shows that the movement for liberalising religious teaching is much wider than our own little denomination, which is only an expression of that wider movement.

But, if in every-day affairs we signed documents with the mental reservation that so far as a great deal of the matter contained in those documents was concerned, we would have nothing to do, would the world pronounce such action honourable? What becomes of the man who enters into contracts and doesn't keep them!

At the Ordination or Installation of a Presbyterian minister, when the candidate is called upon to sign the Confession of Faith, as his belief and the standard by which he will preach, the congregation may watch the new minister write his name without thinking very much of it, without realising indeed the meaning of that act. But by that act of subscribing, not only the minister, but the whole congregation give their assent to the doctrines contained in the Confession of Faith; but, which doctrines the new minister will not have much to do with in his preaching, nor would his congregation long tolerate him if he had.

That is the point where the great difference between Presbyterians and Non-Subscribing Presbyterians is marked. A small thing on the surface, but how much is involved in it? Because of that, because of upholding the fundamental principle of Protestantism, in the right of Private Judgment, our Non-Subscribing Churches broke away from the larger body of Presbyterians.

It is a matter which does concern the layman. By his habitual attendances at one of our churches, by the support which he gives in other ways, he is helping to keep the flag flying, he is making a stand for religious freedom, he is making possible the proclamation of Christ's Gospel in all its fulness and power and grandeur. The difference between his religion and a creed-bound religion is just the difference between a statue veiled and unveiled; stripped of its wrappings it stands forth no longer obscured, but a thing of beauty delighting all who behold it.

For the Children.

METAMORPHOSIS.

"What does METAMORPHOSIS mean, Miss Roper?" said Johnny Armstrong, spelling the word slowly out of the book he was trying to read.

Now, Johnny Armstrong was in some ways a clever little boy; he could read very well although he was not eight years old, but, of course he did not know the meaning of long words like "Metamorphosis." I am afraid he was also a conceited little boy, for he thought himself much cleverer than he really was. He thought he was too clever to play with the nice toys that Father Christmas (believing all little boys like toys) had brought him, so he had taken one of Miss Roper's books.

"Metamorphosis means 'a change from one form into some other form,'" said Miss Roper.

"But, Miss Roper, I don't understand."

"Well, if you were changed from a little boy into one of the animals at the zoo, a 'metamorphosis' would have taken place in you."

"Oh, I shouldn't like that, because animals are stupid things, and can't read, or write, or do anything."

Johnny had hardly ceased speaking before he felt himself flying through the air on his toy aeroplane, and when he looked round to see who was guiding it, it was the cuckoo out of the cuckoo-clock. He thought this very strange, for he knew *he* could not guide it without having been taught.

They had not gone far when the aeroplane began to descend. All at once there was a splash, and Johnny saw they were in the middle of the pond. The cuckoo flew

away. Johnny was sure *he* would be drowned, for he could not swim or work the aeroplane ; but, just then his tin frog, which had come to life, appeared and said, "Get on my back, and I will swim to the edge with you."

Johnny got on its back quickly, and they were soon on dry land.

His toy monkey next appeared. "Follow me quickly," it said, "the boys are fed at three o'clock, and it's nearly that time."

Johnny thought this sounded like the notice at the zoo, but, it was "Lions" there instead of "Boys"; however, he hurried along without waiting for explanations.

"This is your cage," said the monkey.

He was pushed in before he knew what was happening, and the door was locked. Then a dish of porridge, without a spoon, was put in.

Johnny looked around. All his toy animals had come to life, and were standing outside his cage passing remarks about him. He was feeling hungry, so he tried to eat his porridge, but it was too slippery to lift with his fingers, and too thick to drink.

"Look," said his stuffed cat, "he cant' eat his porridge because he hasn't a spoon. If I wanted it, I could soon lap it up."

"Do you know, every time he goes out he has to get a coat and hat on to keep him warm. Why can't he grow a fur coat like mine?" said the teddy bear.

"I saw him try to climb a tree one day to get some nuts," said his squirrel, "but as there were no branches, he fell down on his back. You see he has not any claws like mine to hold by."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the rabbit, "did you ever see him try to run? I do believe a donkey could run quicker."

"Look at his little ears," said his nodding donkey, "I know he can't hear well, for he was pulling me along yesterday, and his governess said the sound of my wheels set her teeth on edge ; but he did not stop, so he could not have heard what she said."

Now, all these remarks made Johnny feel very much ashamed, and he thought he would like to be back in his playroom.

"Will you please unlock the door, as I should like to go home," said Johnny, very politely.

"The monkey has gone on a nutting pic-nic, and he has taken the key," replied the cat.

"Nibble a hole in the door," said his mechanical mouse, "that's what I do when I want to get into a pantry for cheese ; come, I will help you."

Poor Johnny felt desperate, and caught hold of the bars to shake, when suddenly he woke up and found he was holding the bars of his own little bed at home.

"Well, Johnny, have you had a good sleep? You fell asleep on the rug, and never felt me carrying you upstairs, and putting you in bed. It's tea time now."

Johnny could hardly believe that all he thought had happened had only been a dream, and when he got down to his play-room he looked at all his toy animals very closely to see if they were changed in any way. He thought he did notice a change in them, for they looked as if they could tell him a great many things if only they would. But there was a great change in Johnny himself from that day. His dream visit had made him see that in some things animals are cleverer than little boys, and that there were a great many things he had still to learn ; so he grew less and less conceited every day. Then it made him very kind and thoughtful with all animals, for he never could tell when he might really be in a difficulty and need the help of one. So you see a metamorphosis of a kind actually has taken place in Johnny Armstrong.

A GHOSTLY SCENE.

By Rev. W. S. Smith.

IT was 12 o'clock. The night was dark, the road lonely, and a graveyard had to be passed. James A. had been spending an evening with a friend. Conversation had been brisk, for the topics had been varied and perhaps a little exciting, and slight refreshment had rendered both vivacious, but nothing more. At length the time arrived when James felt that he must leave the home of his hospitable friend for his own. From a scene at once bright and cheery, he must enter one of gloom, which was

not at all inviting. The road was not only quiet, but as stated lonely. I am not aware that spirits were feared, or that the local banshee was expected to be abroad, wakening the echoes with its wailing cry, but he doubtless felt some relief as he approached his home, though it was not far from it that the grave-yard was situated.

Musing, the man went along, when he suddenly grew weak and faint. His heart throbbed violently, and he feared he would fall to the ground. What did he see? There, mounting the gate of the grave-yard from the inside, was an object clothed in white! Was he in his proper senses? Yes; he believed so. But there the object was. It descended the gate, and was moving along the road before him. What could it be, emerging from a grave-yard in raiment of white, after the bewitching hour of midnight? It must be something supernatural—a ghost. Forward it went, lightly and silently, and James A., instead of returning, followed it—at a distance; naturally fearing, yet determined to learn something about the strange visitant. James had received a shock, but still retained not only his senses, but his courage also. At length the apparition stopped; stopped opposite the avenue leading up to James A's home. What could it mean? What could it be? What could he do? Was it really a ghost? And if so, whose? He must now either turn back, go forward, or stand still. Summoning almost supernatural courage, he determined to go forward and encounter the object. There the thing stood, apparently awaiting him. On reaching it, it spoke—spoke with the voice of a man, and James A. replied. The mysterious thing proved to be flesh and blood, though dressed in a white robe on the highway, in the dead of night. More; it had a horse collar by its side. James A. soon experienced a sense of relief, and the situation became clear as daylight. Some gipsies, or van travellers, had taken possession of a recess in the road not far away, and early in the evening, had turned the horse loose to graze by the wayside, and the gate of the burying ground being open, it had entered. When discovered later in the evening, the collar had been removed, laid on the ground, and had been forgotten. Long after the owner had retired for the night, the incident respecting the collar was recalled, and fearing, if allowed to remain until morning, it might be stolen, he at once jumped out of bed and rushed to the graveyard in his night shirt, seized the article, and was returning to the van with it, when James A. beheld him in his flowing white robe! But for this solution, the incident might have descended in local history and become known as "The Ghost of Millarstown."

Reports.

Belfast: First Church.—The annual soiree in connection with the Band of Hope was held in the Central Hall, on November 1st, and proved a great success. In spite of unfavourable weather there was a good attendance of members and friends. The minister presided, and spoke hopefully about the plans and prospects of the new session. After the officers and committee had been elected, and the secretary's report and treasurer's statement of accounts read and received, a most enjoyable programme of vocal and instrumental music was provided by the organist and members of the church choir. Frequent recalls and encores let it plainly appear that the artistes had the full sympathy and appreciation of the audience, and at the close a vote of thanks was carried with great acclamation. It was announced that the next meeting of the Band of Hope would be held on December 6th.

Cairncastle.—On Monday evening, 6th November, a congregational meeting, over which the minister, Rev. Eustace Thompson, presided, was held in the Old Meeting-house, to receive a deputation from the Committee of the Sustentation Fund. The delegates were the Rev. Joseph Worthington—Convener of the Fund—and the Revs. H. J. Rossington and J. A. Kelly. These gentlemen explained the purpose of the Fund, stating what had been achieved up to the present in the way of raising the necessary capital and the amount which it was hoped would be raised eventually, namely, at least £20,000. They urged the importance of all members of the congregations contributing their share of practical support to

the scheme, seeing that it was for the good of all. Over and above the first object which was to augment the remuneration of the ministers, the Fund, if heartily and universally supported by the members, would achieve another most desirable result, namely, that of producing a sense of unity and solidarity of the whole group of congregations so recently united in name as the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Moreover, it was said, the amounts contributed by each individual, relative of course to his real ability to give, would reveal the value he attached to his religion, whilst the manner in which the scheme was supported by the congregations collectively would serve as an indication of the amount of religious vitality in the Church. After some of the members of the congregation had asked a few questions, to which they received satisfactory answers, one of them, Mr. Patrick M'Clure, moved a resolution to the effect that those present approved of the scheme, and would do their best to contribute their support. The resolution was seconded by Mr. Thomas Robinson, treasurer of the congregation, and carried unanimously. It was also moved by Mr. M'Clure, seconded by Mr. James Lusk, and carried unanimously, that a vote of thanks be given to the deputation for their visit to Cairncastle and their very clear explanation of the scheme for the Sustentation Fund. After a reply from Mr. Kelly, on behalf of the deputation, the meeting dispersed.

Dromore.—A deputation of the Sustentation Fund Trustees visited Dromore on Sunday, 11th November, to address a congregational meeting convened for the consideration of the Fund. There was a large and representative attendance, notwithstanding the inclement weather. Dr. John Campbell and Mr. John M. Andrews spoke at length on the general aim and object of the Fund, and the Rev. Joseph Worthington, Secretary to the Committee, explained its working and the rules, which it is proposed to adopt for distribution of the income. Mr. Henry Sprott, Mr. Samuel Beck, and other members of the congregation in commenting on the addresses, said, that the scheme was heartily welcomed in Dromore, as our people recognised its urgent necessity. At the conclusion of the proceedings a resolution in support of the scheme, and conveying the thanks of the congregation to the deputation was passed unanimously. General regret was expressed at the absence, owing to illness, of Mr. J. R. Miniss, J.P., the treasurer of the congregation. His many friends, however, will be glad to know, that although still confined to his room, he is now on the fair way to complete recovery.

Glenarm.—On Sunday morning, Oct. 29th, a meeting was held in the church on behalf of the Sustentation Fund. A deputation from the Sustentation Fund Committee was present, consisting of the Rev. J. Worthington and Mr. Harold Thomas. Mr. Worthington conducted the service, and gave an address in which he explained the scheme of the fund, and spoke of the urgent need in connection with the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Mr. Thomas spoke of the advantages of co-operation, and urged the members to do all in their power to further the common good of the Church. At the close of the service a resolution was unanimously passed, pledging the Glenarm congregation to promote to the best of its ability the success of the fund.

Mountpottinger.—The Choir held their annual Halloweve Social on October 31st, when a goodly company assembled in the schoolroom. Prior to, and following after the tea interval, various games were indulged in, while opportunity was also afforded for indulgence in the mazy waltz and other branches of the terpsichorean art. During the evening, Miss Aggie Allen presented to Mr. T. Moore, on behalf of the choir, a choice tea service, as a souvenir of his recent marriage. A pleasing variety was imparted by songs, rendered by Mrs. Robinson and Rev. J. D. Davies. The evening was most successful, and the arrangements were admirably carried out by the Organist, Miss M. Morrow, A.R.C.M.

On Monday, 30th October, a Hallowe'en party for the scholars was held in the schoolroom. Tea was served to between fifty and sixty scholars. After tea, a pleasant surprise in the form of a real "Punch and Judy" show awaited the children. Punch, as usual, came out triumphant and smiling, in spite of, seemingly, very adverse circumstances. This greatly delighted the children. Toby

before leaving made friends with the children, and was regaled with cakes. After this games were enjoyed, and apples and cakes having been dispensed, a thoroughly enjoyable evening was brought to a close.

On Sunday, November 12th, the morning service was conducted by the Moderator (Rev. T. Dunkerley), whose object in coming was to bring prominently under the congregation's notice the claims and aims of the Sustentation Fund. After the service, in which, by means of his address, Mr. Dunkerley pointed out to his hearers salient points of the new scheme, a Congregational Meeting took place, Mr. John Johnston being voted to the chair. He in turn called upon Mr. A. Hanna to move a resolution to the effect that the congregation found itself in agreement with the scheme, and pledged itself to support same as far as it lay in its power. This was done in the speaker's customary style, and found a seconder in Mr. H. Napier. Messrs. H. Thomas, J. Allen, and H. L. Orr having spoken, and the Moderator answered questions put by even more of the speakers, the chairman summed up, and asked the congregation to vote on the resolution, the answer being a unanimous one. Owing to the inclement weather and prevalent sickness, the congregation, although a representative one, was not so large as would otherwise have been the case.

Newry.—The usual monthly meeting of the Guild was held on Tuesday evening, November 14th, in the Schoolroom There was a large attendance of members and friends to hear a lecture on the "Life of King George V." delivered by the Rev G. J. Slipper, and illustrated by lantern views, kindly lent by the S. H. Benson Co. Mr. C. Warnock presided, and the lantern was skilfully manipulated by Mr. Andrew Thompson. At the conclusion of the lecture, the usual votes of thanks were passed to the lecturer and lanternist Several new members were enrolled, and it is very gratifying to record an increased membership this season.

Unity Guild.—The November meeting was held in Mountpottinger School room, on the 15th of the month, Rev. J. Worthington, B.A., presiding. The lecturer was Rev. G. L Phelps, who had for his subject, Browning's "Philosophy of Life." Doubtless the compliment Mr. Phelps paid his audience by choice of subject was a high one, and great credit is due to him for undertaking the duty at short notice, but it is to be feared, that whilst as a literary effort the lecture was of a high order, it could not be said to be readily remembered by the audience, and it would certainly need a more facile pen than that of the present chronicler to give anything approaching a resumé of the lecture. The December Meeting will be held in York Street Hall on the 13th inst., when Rev. S. E. Bowen will lecture on Jerome K. Jerome's "Passing of the third floor back."

Echoes.

The generosity of the Sharpe family to Unitarian institutions has been unbounded. Commencing, so far as the writer is aware, with the late Mr. Samuel Sharpe, Biblical scholar and translator, and continued by his daughters—the Misses Matilda and Emily Sharpe—their benefactions have been great indeed. In 1875 Mr. Sharpe commenced with a donation of £100 to the Ministers' Benevolent Society, which, since his death, has been continued yearly by the Misses Sharpe. It is to them we are indebted for the Channing House School The British and Foreign Unitarian Association has benefited much by their generosity, and the Unitarian Home Missionary College has been greatly assisted by the Sharpe family. And now we are informed that Miss Emily Sharpe has given to that college Bank of England stock, producing £100 per annum, for the maintenance of a Unitarian Hungarian student at that institution. May there be many imitators!

* *

Is there anything the matter with the popular theology? One may reasonably ask such a question as this, when one reads what was said by an eminent preacher, in a Methodist pulpit, in the English Midlands, a few weeks ago. During the reading of the lessons he attacked the translations of both the Authorised and Revised Versions of the Bible, saying the Authorised ought to be abolished, while the Revised was only a timid attempt to pourtray the original. The discourse was

on "Prayer," in which the preacher showed himself a thorough iconoclast. His hearers, he said, were in the habit of praying to a little God, while the usual times and places for engaging in prayer were set at nought! He could pray on a bicycle as well as anywhere, and thank God devoutly for an expanded chest of bracing air—a great gift. The devil and evil spirits had a bad time of it. Yet the effect of the service as a whole, it was reported, was most invigorating and uplifting. One cannot help asking how such a preacher gets into Methodist pulpits, from which men are still cast out, if they deny the doctrine of everlasting punishment? Truly, theological incongruity is marvellous.

* *

In an article in *The Christian Life* of November 11th last on Vienne, a large city in France, "A. G." gives a hear-say definition of a Unitarian that is far from flattering. It is as follows: "A Unitarian is a man who believes in himself, and fancies that Almighty God believes in him too." This may possibly be descriptive of a few English brethren, but I must protest warmly against its being regarded as characteristic of our Irish brethren.

At Limerick Petty Sessions a few weeks since, "a professional goose plucker" was summoned before the magistrates for plucking geese while alive. This was a horrible charge. Not so, however, in the opinion of the majority of the magistrates present. So the "professional" gentleman was discharged and can therefore continue his gruesome work with a clear conscience so far as the local magnates are concerned. Like cures like, says the homeopathist. If he could have his hair and beard plucked out in homeopathic tufts, it might help to cure him of his abominable practice. The incident recalls to mind the old woman who was seen skinning eels alive. On being remonstrated with, she exclaimed—"Why, I've been skinning eels these forty years, and they are used to it now!"

* *

Actions are said to speak louder than words. The following is an illustration: A church dignitary procured a situation for a girl, who, however, did not remain in it many days. Returning, she went to the dignitary again, in the hope of having another situation got for her. The gentleman was greatly surprised, saying he had sent her to a good, Christian woman, and could not understand her wanting another situation so soon. To this the girl replied—'But do not send me to a good Christian woman again, please." The reader can comment for himself.

* *

Very poor literary stuff is often maed to do duty as hymns for adults, but perhaps that which is sometimes served as pabulum for Sunday school children is worse. In the following, there is more nonsense than religion, but nonsense will do if it has a religious flavour about it. I presume those who used it thought it useful and elevating. It was sung in a Congregational Sunday school in Kent by the "infants":—

"Yes, yes, yes, oh yes;
Jesus died for little ones like me.
You say how do I know it?
John III. 16 will show it,
That big word 'whosoever' just means me.

The above stuff was not sufficient for one service, and so the following was added:—

God wants the boys, the merry, merry boys,
The noisy boys, the funny boys,
The thoughtless boys—
God wants the boys with all their joys.

God wants the girls, the happy-hearted girls,
The loving girls, the best of girls,
The worst of girls—
God wants to make the girls His pearls."

Every attractive feature we expect in a hymn is absent from the above specimens, and only the merest benevolent twaddle is seen.

* *

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, held its Annual Meeting in Dublin, in October last. This society was founded in 1884, since which time it has dealt with 671,220 complaints, involving 1,847,797 children. During the month of September alone, 4,392 cases were investigated. As proof of the necessity for the work of this society, it may be stated that 145 children died while their cases were being looked into. All this suffering is not, however, due to cruelty. By far the greater portion is due to ignorance, which prevails to a fearful extent. The lower animals can bring up their young better than many human parents bring up theirs.

What infatuation is displayed by many people in regard to finery! Everything else is of slight importance compared with it. To secure trappings of this sort, many will rob the living; some will even rob the dead. This latter is surely a new crime. It prevails as a sort of epidemic, at the present time, at Crewe in Cheshire, where girls and young women have taken to attacking and robbing memorial wreaths placed on the graves of the recently interred. In half-an-hour after a funeral has taken place, in the Crewe cemetery, graves have been attacked. Some of the culprits have been prosecuted, but not punished, only reprimanded and set free. They deserved to have been compelled to replace the spoliated wreaths with fresh ones of equal value. The depredations wrought by these unscrupulous people have been described by a cemetery official as "appalling." Evidently, severe measures are required in dealing with these girl hooligans.

W. S. S.

"There are those who seem doomed to earthly toil; there are others whose souls leap up to triumphant thoughts. These two sorts of men belong together, make one world, and deserve each the other's whole-souled respect. In this universe, where natural and spiritual minister to one another, he who at any spot is doing good work of any kind is serving the universal Master, and contributing to the universal success."—*Phillips Brooks.*

—*Phillips Brooks.*

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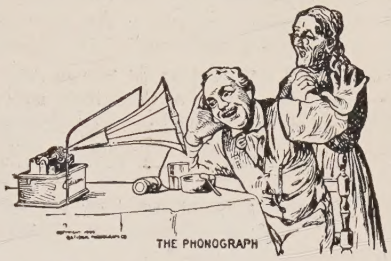

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